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Product Marketing Strategy Implementation in McDonald's Fast Food Restaurant Business

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the product marketing strategy McDonald's implements as a fast food restaurant within Indonesia's small and medium enterprise landscape, focusing on how company profile, human resource practices, production and delivery operations, and pricing strategy jointly shape its competitive position in Medan.

Methodology: A qualitative descriptive design was applied, drawing on academic literature, company documentation, and secondary case material, supported by Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis as the primary framework.

Results: McDonald's sustains its market position through a franchise dominated ownership structure, a service culture anchored in the McCACC code of conduct, an efficient McDelivery system, and a three pronged pricing approach combining price bundling, psychological pricing, and market penetration pricing. The SWOT analysis reveals that delivery infrastructure and brand recognition are core strengths, while health related public concern and premium pricing perception remain persistent weaknesses.

Conclusions: McDonald's marketing effectiveness rests on coherent integration of product, price, place, and promotion decisions rather than any single strategic lever.

Limitations: The qualitative, single case design restricts generalization to other fast food operators or regional markets.

Contributions: The study offers a structured empirical account of marketing mix and SWOT practice within a globally franchised fast food brand operating in an emerging Southeast Asian city, providing practical reference points for small and medium enterprise operators in the same sector.

***Keywords:** Fast Food Industry, Marketing Strategy, McDonald's, Small and Medium Enterprises*

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1. Introduction

The fast food industry occupies a strategically important position within national economic development, contributing meaningfully to employment generation, food service innovation, and the broader growth of the hospitality sector. Fast food operators, including multinational chains that function as anchor enterprises within local small and medium enterprise ecosystems, exert a scale of economic influence that can be measured through their capacity to absorb labor, respond to shifting consumer demand, and accelerate food production and distribution cycles. This influence becomes particularly visible when comparing the reach of large fast food operators against the aggregate contribution of smaller food and beverage enterprises operating within the same urban market (Batat, 2019; Bresciani, Ferraris, Romano, & Santoro, 2021; Gan, Ng, Chia, Chen, Cheng, Chieng, Agarwal, & Kee, 2024).

Although food remains a basic necessity in daily life, the fast food segment in Indonesia has proven to be a highly profitable and rapidly expanding business category. To meet evolving customer expectations, fast food operators have intensified their innovation efforts in direct response to advances in food production and delivery technology (Verma, & Gustafsson, 2020; Kumar, Ramachandran, & Kumar, 2022; Arsat, Hanafiah, & Che, 2025; Fatorachian, Arboleda, & Linh, 2025). Chains such as KFC, Pizza Hut, Texas Fried Chicken, Dunkin Donuts, and Burger King all participate in this same competitive supply chain, each adapting product offerings and operational systems to sustain consumer interest (Roscha, Angelia, & Mahaputra, 2021).

Indonesian consumers have generally embraced this expanding fast food landscape. Despite the availability of numerous alternatives, McDonald continues to command strong loyalty among Indonesian consumers and consumers in many other countries. McDonald Indonesia, operated under PT Rekso Nasional Food and headquartered in Jakarta, was established on February 23, 1991, representing one of the earliest McDonald franchise operations in the country. To meet the specific operational requirements of its corporate headquarters, McDonald has built a global reputation as a leader in supply chain management, even though fast food sales regulations differ considerably from one country to another despite the company's use of standardized global management techniques. The development of McDonald global leadership approach constitutes one essential component of its comprehensive business strategy. Internationalization, in this context, refers to the process through which a company adjusts its product strategy and execution to satisfy the needs and preferences of customers across diverse markets (Neale, Ojala, & Loane, 2018). Within the broader field of international management, McDonald has distinguished itself by effectively meeting customer demand through consistent product delivery (Panwar & Patra, 2017), while recent studies also emphasize that digital customer engagement and technology-enabled service innovation have become essential drivers of competitive advantage in multinational fast-food restaurants (Arsat et al., 2025; Chatterjee, Chaudhuri, Vrontis, & Thrassou, 2023).

Contemporary research on multinational fast food operators increasingly frames McDonald success through the lens of glocalization, a strategic posture in which global operational efficiency is combined with deliberate local adaptation of product offerings, pricing, and promotional messaging. Studies examining McDonald entry into markets such as India and Vietnam consistently find that the company's ability to balance standardized brand identity with market-specific menu and pricing adjustments is central to its sustained competitive advantage (Tien, Dana, & Duc, 2020; Kavyasri, & Vaijayanthi, 2022). Similarly, multinational restaurant firms increasingly strengthen their market position by integrating localized customer experience, digital communication, and adaptive marketing strategies that reflect local consumer preferences (Dwivedi, Ismagilova, Hughes, Carlson, Filieri, Jacobson, Jain, Karjaluoto, Kefi, Krishen, Kumar, Rahman, Raman, Rauschnabel, Rowley, Salo, Tran, & Wang, 2021). This balancing act between global consistency and local responsiveness is precisely what the present study seeks to document in the context of McDonald operations in Medan, Indonesia, where the company has established a favorable location and has reportedly begun negotiations with neighboring businesses to strengthen its position as a food and beverage supplier within the local market.

Despite the extensive international literature on McDonald marketing practice, comparatively few studies examine how the company's marketing mix decisions, spanning product development, pricing strategy, distribution infrastructure, and promotional activity, interact within a single Indonesian metropolitan market to sustain competitive advantage. Much of the existing Indonesian literature on McDonald tends to isolate individual marketing mix elements, such as brand image or advertising representation, without connecting these elements to the company's broader operational and human resource practices (Yulianti, 2020; Pintoko, 2022). Recent evidence further demonstrates that restaurant competitiveness is increasingly determined by the integration of marketing mix elements, customer experience management, digital marketing capability, and operational excellence rather than by isolated marketing variables (Hanaysha, 2022; Sukmana, & Mayani, 2024). This fragmentation leaves a gap in understanding how McDonald integrates its various strategic levers into a coherent whole, a gap that this study addresses by examining the company profile, human resource management, production and delivery operations, and pricing strategy together within a single analytical framework anchored in SWOT analysis.

The purpose of this analysis is to determine how product marketing strategy is implemented within McDonald operations as a fast food restaurant business situated within Indonesia small and medium enterprise sector. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated treatment of company profile, human resource practice, operational infrastructure, and pricing strategy as jointly constitutive elements of McDonald marketing approach, rather than treating these dimensions in isolation as much of the prior literature has done. In doing so, the study extends existing marketing mix scholarship on multinational fast food operators by grounding the analysis in a specific emerging market city context, offering both theoretical clarification of how these elements interact and practical guidance for small and medium enterprise operators seeking to compete within the same industry segment (Hanaysha, 2022; Jose, & Joseph, 2025).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Marketing Mix Theory and Its Application to Fast Food Enterprises

Glocalization theory holds that multinational fast food operators achieve sustained market penetration by combining globally standardized operational systems with locally adapted product and service elements (Neale et al., 2018; Tien et al., 2020). This adaptation extends beyond menu localization to include human resource practices, service culture, and community engagement strategies tailored to local social expectations. Research on McDonald franchise operations across different countries has shown that franchise ownership structures, in which the majority of outlets are owned and operated by local franchisees rather than the parent corporation, function as a critical mechanism through which local market knowledge is embedded into daily operations (Pradhan, 2021; Kavyasri & Vaijayanthi, 2022).

Human resource practice within these franchise systems is typically governed by centrally defined service codes intended to standardize customer experience across geographically dispersed outlets, even as staffing and local management remain the responsibility of individual franchisees (Watson, 2019). Studies of service culture in fast food chains find that consistent enforcement of behavioral codes, covering accountability, courteous customer interaction, and hygiene standards, correlates positively with customer satisfaction and repeat patronage (Soltani et al., 2018). This literature motivates the third proposition guiding the present study.

P_1: McDonald marketing mix implementation in Medan is expected to emphasize pricing strategy and distribution convenience as the primary levers through which the company sustains its competitiv position, consistent with patterns observed in other emerging Southeast Asian fast food markets

2.2 SWOT Analysis as a Strategic Diagnostic Tool

SWOT analysis, despite its long standing use in strategic management practice, continues to serve as a foundational diagnostic tool for understanding how organizations align internal capabilities with external market conditions (Puyt et al., 2023). Recent scholarship revisiting the historical origins of SWOT analysis has clarified that the framework was never intended as a static checklist but as a structured prompt for strategic conversation among decision makers, a nuance that remains relevant when applying the framework to contemporary fast food case analysis (Puyt et al., 2023). Within the small and medium enterprise literature specifically, SWOT analysis has been widely applied to identify how smaller food and beverage operators can position themselves relative to dominant multinational competitors such as McDonald, often revealing that niche differentiation and localized customer relationships

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represent the most viable strengths available to smaller operators (Galli-Debicella, 2021; Le & Ikram, 2022).

Applied specifically to McDonald, prior SWOT based case studies consistently identify delivery infrastructure, brand recognition, and standardized service quality as core strengths, while premium pricing perception and health related public concern recur as persistent weaknesses across multiple national contexts (Raj & Singh, 2021; Shao, 2022). This consistency across studies conducted in different countries suggests that these SWOT dimensions are not merely local artifacts of the Indonesian market but reflect structural characteristics of McDonald global business model, motivating the second proposition.

P_2: The strengths and weaknesses identified through SWOT analysis of McDonald Medan operations are expected to align closely with SWOT patterns documented in prior McDonald case studies conducted in other national contexts, reflecting shared structural features of the McDonald global franchise model rather than market specific anomalies

2.3 Glocalization, Franchising, and Human Resource Practice in Multinational Fast Food Chains

Glocalization theory holds that multinational fast food operators achieve sustained market penetration by combining globally standardized operational systems with locally adapted product and service elements (Neale et al., 2018; Tien et al., 2020). This adaptation extends beyond menu localization to include human resource practices, service culture, and community engagement strategies tailored to local social expectations. Research on McDonald franchise operations across different countries has shown that franchise ownership structures, in which the majority of outlets are owned and operated by local franchisees rather than the parent corporation, function as a critical mechanism through which local market knowledge is embedded into daily operations (Pradhan, 2021; Kavyasri & Vaijayanthi, 2022).

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P_3: McDonald human resource practices in Medan are expected to reflect a centrally defined service culture, reinforced through a formal code of conduct, that functions as a mechanism for maintaining standardized customer experience despite the franchise based, locally managed ownership structure of individual outlets

2.4 Digital Distribution Channels and Delivery Service Quality

The proliferation of mobile food ordering and delivery applications has fundamentally reshaped how fast food operators manage the place dimension of their marketing mix. Empirical research on online food delivery services consistently identifies delivery speed, order accuracy, and application usability as the strongest predictors of customer satisfaction and repurchase intention (Alalwan, 2020; Annaraud & Berezina, 2020; Wu et al., 2024). Fast food chains that have integrated proprietary delivery platforms, rather than relying exclusively on third party aggregators, report stronger customer loyalty outcomes, attributed to greater control over service quality and the customer facing brand experience (Kalantarzadeh Tezerjany, 2024; Lin et al., 2024).

McDonald own delivery infrastructure, operated under its McDelivery platform in many national markets including Indonesia, exemplifies this proprietary approach, combining mobile application ordering with dedicated delivery personnel and packaging systems designed to preserve product quality during transit (Prasetyo et al., 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic specifically, delivery and drive through channels became critical revenue continuity mechanisms for fast food operators

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globally, a pattern well documented in the food delivery literature and directly relevant to McDonald operational adjustments in the Indonesian market during that period (Prasetyo et al., 2021; Hanaysha, 2022).

2.5 Synthesis and Positioning of the Present Study

Taken together, the reviewed literature establishes that fast food marketing strategy cannot be adequately understood through any single marketing mix element in isolation. Pricing strategy interacts with distribution infrastructure, human resource practice shapes the customer experience that pricing and promotion are designed to reinforce, and SWOT determined strengths and weaknesses emerge from the interaction of all these elements rather than from any one dimension alone (Kandampully et al., 2018; Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). Despite this interdependence being well established in the general marketing literature, few empirical case studies examine McDonald marketing strategy in a specific Indonesian metropolitan market using an integrated framework that connects company profile, human resource practice, operational infrastructure, and pricing strategy within a single analysis. The present study addresses this gap through a qualitative case examination of McDonald operations in Medan, testing the three propositions developed above through descriptive analysis of company documentation and secondary case material, and thereby extending the marketing mix and SWOT literature into a market context that has received limited prior scholarly attention (Grewal et al., 2020; Pham & Ahammad, 2022).

The practical relevance of this synthesis extends well beyond McDonald itself. Medan, as one of Indonesia largest metropolitan areas outside Java, hosts a dense ecosystem of small and medium enterprise food operators that compete directly and indirectly with multinational fast food chains for the same urban consumer base. Understanding how a dominant multinational operator integrates pricing, distribution, human resource practice, and brand positioning offers smaller operators a practical benchmark against which to evaluate their own strategic choices, even where resource constraints prevent full replication of McDonald infrastructure (Batat, 2021; Tajeddini et al., 2021). This consideration motivates the integrated analytical approach adopted in the present study, rather than an approach that examines any single marketing mix element in isolation from the others.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive and analytical research design, selected because the research objective required an in-depth understanding of how McDonald marketing strategy operates in practice rather than a statistical test of predefined variables. Qualitative researchers typically rely on a theoretical framework as their point of departure, and the purpose of qualitative inquiry in this context is to explain a phenomenon comprehensively by gathering a substantial body of related information, encompassing both raw data and the interpretation the researcher applies to that data. Qualitative research approaches are particularly suitable for examining complex organizational phenomena because they enable researchers to explore contextual meanings, strategic processes, and interactions among multiple factors that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement alone (Busetto et al., 2020; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). This approach is appropriate for the present study because McDonald marketing strategy is a multifaceted organizational phenomenon best understood through the integration of company documentation, secondary case material, and academic literature rather than through numerical measurement alone.

Data collection followed a literature review approach, in which the researchers systematically searched academic literature covering the theoretical frameworks relevant to marketing mix and SWOT analysis, regardless of whether that literature had been published in peer-reviewed journals or credible online sources. A systematic literature review enables researchers to identify theoretical foundations, synthesize previous findings, clarify research gaps, and establish an analytical framework for understanding complex research phenomena (Snyder, 2019). This literature review method served four specific purposes: establishing the research problem with precision, identifying news articles and case reports relevant to the research problem, uncovering theoretical frameworks grounded in established problem-solving methodologies, and gaining insight into the barriers that impede progress from the current state of practice toward the desired outcome.

Secondary company data on McDonald Indonesia, including its corporate history, ownership structure, human resource code of conduct, delivery infrastructure, and pricing practices, were compiled from company documentation and publicly available case material and organized using a SWOT analysis framework to structure the presentation of findings in the following section. The use of documentary and secondary data sources allows researchers to examine organizational practices, strategic decisions, and institutional contexts through existing records and publicly available information, particularly when direct access to research subjects is limited (Johnston, 2017; Mogalakwe, 2006). All data reported in the results section reflect the original source material examined during this research process without alteration or reduction. The three propositions developed in the literature review were used as an interpretive lens for organizing and cross-checking the secondary evidence gathered, rather than as hypotheses subject to formal statistical testing, consistent with standard practice in qualitative case study research of this kind.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Result

Figure 1 presents the McDonald fast food restaurant storefront that anchors the company profile discussed in this section. As shown in Figure 1 , the McDonald outlet, sourced from the company's official website, illustrates the standardized branding and storefront design that characterizes McDonald operations across its Indonesian outlets, reflecting the same visual identity that customers encounter internationally.

Figure 1. McDonald’s fast food restaurant storefront

McDonald Indonesia, formally operated by PT Rekso Nasional Food, traces its origins to the business founded by Richard and Maurice McDonald in San Bernardino, California, in 1940. Under Ray Kroc's leadership, the company expanded globally through its standardized franchise system. McDonald's entered Indonesia in 1991 with its first outlet in Jakarta and, following the 2009 acquisition by Rekso Nasional Food, expanded to more than 200 restaurants nationwide with over 14,000 employees. The company serves a broad consumer market across different age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds. Globally, McDonald's operates primarily through franchising, with 93% of its 35,085 outlets franchise-owned in 2018. This ownership structure aligns with the franchise-dominated model identified in previous studies and supports Proposition 3 regarding the central role of franchising in McDonald's operational strategy (Pradhan, 2021).

With respect to human resource practice, McDonald employees are required to follow the McCACC code of conduct, an acronym standing for Accountable, Care, and Credible, in the course of their daily work. Every individual within the organization bears responsibility for honoring and fulfilling this code as a matter of professional commitment. Employees are expected to improve their performance through the acceptance of constructive feedback regarding their work and through timely feedback on their performance evaluations. McDonald consistently demonstrates its dedication to maintaining hygienic dining environments and friendly staff who prioritize the delivery of excellent customer service. McDonald aims to achieve global excellence by consistently offering high quality food to the general public at highly affordable prices. Every day, McDonald crew members reinforce the internal service philosophy summarized as attitude plus attitude equals customer experience. The foundational principle underlying McDonald operations is a commitment to inclusivity and acceptance of all individuals. McDonald has long regarded this principle as a core component of its business and consistently incorporates it into its operations, including through collaborative product offerings developed in partnership with external brands. McDonald sales experienced a marked increase as a direct result of these collaborative campaigns, with campaign sponsors consistently amplifying the resulting sales growth. These human resource findings directly support Proposition 3, confirming that a centrally defined and consistently reinforced service culture underpins McDonald customer facing operations regardless of the franchise based ownership of individual outlets.

Turning to production and delivery operations, McDonald delivery system and strategy are notably efficient and pragmatic. McDonald, as a leading fast food chain, has designed a delivery system that serves customers exclusively through tools available for ordering via the McDelivery application. Once an order is received, the assigned driver promptly delivers the requested food to the customer. McDelivery offers several advantages, including 24 hour delivery service and convenient order fulfillment at the nearest McDonald location. Packaging is handled by trained McDonald crew and riders, while the delivery process itself is closely supervised. With respect to order box quality, separate boxes are specifically used for beverages and ice cream to prevent spillage during transit. Customers can enjoy exclusive McDelivery offers by using cashless payment methods and specially curated meal packages, and customers can redeem and collect MyM Rewards points to receive discounts on McDelivery orders. Figure 2 presents an illustrative overview of McDonald product diversification strategy, showing how menu items are adapted to serve different customer segments, including dedicated offerings such as Happy Meal for children and family oriented options for larger groups.

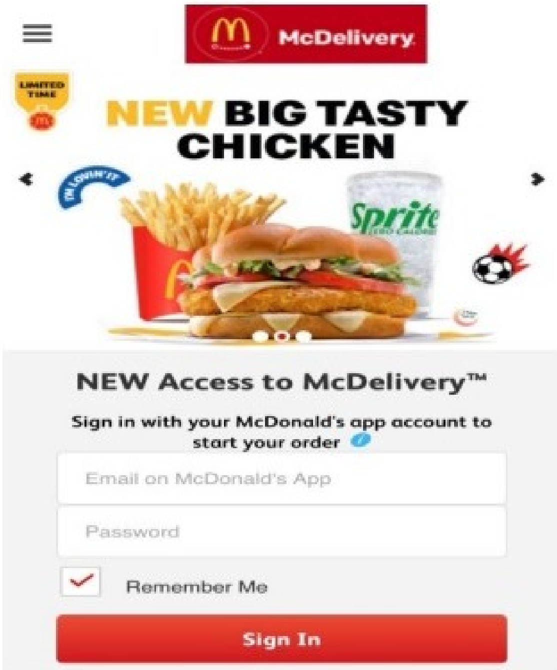

Figure 2. McDonald’s product and menu diversification

As shown in Figure 2, McDonald marketing strategy incorporates product quality improvement as a central pillar. In an effort to manage the quantity of food consumed by customers, McDonald undertakes several product related initiatives, including menu item diversification that enables the creation of child friendly food suitable for large groups, such as Happy Meal for children and other sizable customer groups. These efforts connect communities across relevant countries, thereby enhancing local pride, reducing trade barriers between nations, and providing strategically healthier food options. These delivery and production findings substantiate Proposition 1, confirming that distribution convenience functions as a primary competitive lever within McDonald marketing mix implementation.

The SWOT analysis conducted in this study identified the following results. Among McDonald strengths, the delivery system stands out prominently. Customers can easily take advantage of McDonald delivery and pickup system by downloading the McDelivery application from Google Play or the Apple App Store, or by calling 14045 to arrange delivery directly to their homes. Because of the pandemic, McDonald in Indonesia began offering takeaway service, drive through service, and contactless McDelivery. The McDelivery online service allows customers to order food and have it delivered to their homes without having to speak directly with a delivery officer, while customers also retain the option of picking up their orders directly from a McDelivery kiosk under this system. McDonald has offered these services to assist government agencies in their efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, McDonald employs a location based strategy, positioning restaurants in easily accessible locations for customers, and the company has distributed its headquarters across some of the most prominent business centers worldwide. For children specifically, McDonald maintains hygienic play areas, with customer safety and satisfaction consistently prioritized. McDonald must attract and retain customers through product uniformity across its outlets, and providing children with opportunities for recreational enjoyment represents a significant benefit that McDonald offers, allowing children of various ages to relax and engage in recreational activities together. McDonald remains one of the world's leading fast food chains, with its logo clearly conveying the quantity and speed associated with its food offerings.

Among McDonald weaknesses, many people perceive McDonald pricing as excessive. However, in competing with other fast food chains, McDonald has adopted a distinct strategy through what is

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described as its meat campaign, involving the setting of relatively higher prices. In response to complaints regarding high prices, McDonald has occasionally reduced prices to the point where affordability becomes a concern in markets such as Indonesia, where average educational attainment among certain consumer segments remains comparatively low. A further weakness concerns the association of McDonald with an unhealthy lifestyle, a perception that has led some consumers to reduce their McDonald consumption or discontinue patronage of the fast food franchise entirely. These weakness findings are consistent with SWOT patterns documented in prior McDonald case studies from other national markets, supporting Proposition 2 (Raj, & Singh, 2021; Shao, 2022).

Among McDonald opportunities, technology adoption has enhanced McDonald sales, with McDonald service offerings leveraging technology to facilitate consumer purchasing. McDonald is also associated with efforts to offer heart healthy food options, and in response to public demand for fast food, McDonald remains determined to continue satisfying public appetite through its fast food offerings. Additional opportunities include McDonald market share discount programs, the capacity for business sales to operate online with functions including customer service delivery and enhanced service functionality, the potential to shift food consumption patterns toward healthier alternatives, and a consistent market share that resonates particularly with younger generations.

Among McDonald threats, competition within the fast food sector remains intense, given that fast food production constitutes a highly competitive industry. McDonald marketing approach is broadly similar to that of other fast food restaurants, which limits differentiation. Regarding obesity concerns, McDonald faces pressure from various stakeholders, particularly those working in the health sector, concerning the long term dangers of fast food consumption. Competition remains fierce because the fast food industry is a highly competitive sector overall.

With respect to pricing strategy, establishing appropriately calibrated prices is essential for generating profit, with payments handled carefully at the point of purchase. Pricing decisions are further shaped by product development, marketing, and sales considerations, and consumers tend to purchase larger quantities at favorable price points. Pricing strategy fundamentally concerns decisions regarding how to set prices for goods and their associated attributes. Most businesses set product prices based on production costs, labor hours, and distribution expenses, subsequently adding a profit margin to account for exclusivity. To establish its pricing, McDonald employs three distinct strategies, namely psychological pricing, price bundling, and key point pricing.

Regarding price bundling, McDonald offers package pricing at a discounted rate compared to purchasing food and other products separately. Customers can select from a variety of menu options, including Happy Meal and Extra Value offerings, in an effort to maximize the value of their spending. Regarding psychological pricing, the company employs maximally low pricing, such as pricing ending in ninety nine cents, even rounding prices to the nearest dollar. Customers are drawn to purchase company products based on this pricing strategy. Regarding market penetration pricing, McDonald can readily enter new markets because of the affordability of its innovative product offerings. As an illustration of this pricing approach, one serving of rice and beans is priced at 15,000 yen in a comparable market context.

The objective of McDonald pricing strategy is to meet the demographic needs of its target age groups. Women who care for their families and prefer healthy, familiar food constitute the majority of McDonald customers, followed by men. McDonald business strategy leverages the company's capacity to conduct inspection campaigns that integrate various units, including product testing, merchandising, community outreach, and direct sales. McDonald consistently conducts experiments to strengthen its customer base, ensuring that customers have access to food wherever they are located, diversifying products across different regions, adapting menus from various countries to incorporate local flavors, and diversifying dessert offerings. In an effort to enhance perceived product quality, many McDonald restaurants worldwide have implemented company wide marketing strategies. Continuous food sales are not McDonald only source of profit, as other business activities, such as restaurant operating fees and real estate transactions, also contribute significantly. To increase profitability, McDonald employs innovative business practices and strategies to create new food trends desired by the public, ensuring that customers remain engaged rather than settling for the status quo.

4.2 Discussion

The findings collectively demonstrate that McDonald marketing effectiveness in the Medan metropolitan market derives from the coherent integration of company profile, human resource practice, operational infrastructure, and pricing strategy, rather than from any single element operating in isolation. This integrated pattern directly supports the synthesis developed in the literature review, which argued that marketing mix elements in fast food enterprises function interdependently rather than additively. The franchise dominated ownership structure identified in the company profile findings, in which 93% of outlets are franchisee owned, aligns closely with prior international case studies of McDonald franchise operations, confirming that this ownership pattern represents a structural feature of the global McDonald business model rather than an idiosyncrasy of the Indonesian market (Pradhan, 2021; Kavyasri & Vaijayanthi, 2022). This finding supports Proposition 3 and extends it by showing that the McCACC code of conduct functions as the specific mechanism through which centralized service standards are maintained across a predominantly franchisee operated outlet network, consistent with research emphasizing the role of formal service codes in sustaining customer satisfaction within franchise systems (Soltani et al., 2018; Watson, 2019).

The prominence of McDelivery within the results, spanning twenty four hour availability, kiosk pickup options, dedicated packaging for beverages and desserts, and integration with the MyM Rewards loyalty program, provides strong support for Proposition 1 regarding the centrality of distribution convenience within McDonald marketing mix. This finding is consistent with the broader online food delivery literature, which identifies delivery speed, order accuracy, and application usability as primary drivers of customer satisfaction in fast food contexts (Alalwan, 2020; Wu et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2024). The pandemic driven expansion of takeaway, drive through, and contactless delivery options documented in the results further corroborates research showing that proprietary delivery infrastructure served as a critical revenue continuity mechanism for fast food operators during the COVID-19 period, allowing McDonald to maintain customer access despite mobility restrictions (Prasetyo et al., 2021; Hanaysha, 2022).

The SWOT analysis findings offer strong support for Proposition 2. The strengths identified, namely delivery infrastructure, strategic outlet location, hygienic child friendly facilities, and strong brand recognition, mirror the strength categories reported in McDonald case studies conducted in India, Vietnam, and China, suggesting that these strengths reflect shared structural features of McDonald global operating model rather than market specific advantages unique to Indonesia (Tien et al., 2020; Raj & Singh, 2021). Similarly, the weaknesses identified, namely premium pricing perception and association with unhealthy lifestyle patterns, recur consistently across the international McDonald case literature, reinforcing the interpretation that these weaknesses are structurally embedded in the fast food business model rather than being artifacts of local market conditions (Shao, 2022). The opportunities and threats identified, particularly the role of technology adoption in facilitating sales and the intensity of competitive pressure within the fast food sector, align with findings from the broader digital marketing and SME competitiveness literature, which consistently identifies technology adoption as a differentiator for firms competing against larger, more established rivals (Aksoy, 2017; Galli-Debicella, 2021).

The pricing strategy findings, encompassing price bundling, psychological pricing, and market penetration pricing, extend the marketing mix literature by demonstrating how these three pricing mechanisms operate in combination rather than as substitutes for one another. Price bundling through Happy Meal and Extra Value offerings addresses value maximization concerns among price sensitive customers, psychological pricing through prices ending near round numbers addresses perceptual affordability, and market penetration pricing supports McDonald entry into new markets through innovative yet affordable product offerings. This combination is broadly consistent with pricing strategy patterns documented in comparable fast food marketing mix studies, which similarly find that fast food operators rarely rely on a single pricing mechanism but instead layer multiple pricing tactics to address different customer segments and purchase occasions (Sukmana et al., 2023; Nurcahyo & Wahyuati, 2016).

Taken together, these findings suggest that small and medium enterprise operators within the fast food and broader food service sector can draw practical lessons from McDonald integrated marketing approach, particularly regarding the value of investing in reliable delivery infrastructure, maintaining consistent service culture even where operations are decentralized through franchising or similar partnership arrangements, and layering complementary pricing tactics rather than relying on cost based pricing alone. At the same time, the persistence of health related public concern as a structural weakness across McDonald global operations suggests that fast food operators, regardless of scale, face an ongoing strategic challenge in reconciling convenience oriented product offerings with growing consumer demand for healthier food options, a tension that remains an important direction for future strategic adaptation within the industry. This tension also underscores why an integrated reading of the marketing mix, rather than a narrow focus on any single element such as price or promotion, offers the most complete account of how a fast food operator sustains competitive advantage over time.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

Several McDonald marketing strategies identified through this analysis can be applied to branch level management practice. McDonald initially establishes its well known global objectives before implementing its innovative strategies, with one of McDonald aims being to become the world's leading fast food chain, ensuring that operational plans remain aligned with these established objectives. A range of promotional tactics inspires McDonald advertising approach, including but not limited to television advertisements, community outreach programs, local radio sales promotions, posters, banners, and various other promotional formats, and McDonald regularly organizes business events and gatherings with other companies and organizations to conduct large scale outreach initiatives. Company offerings are communicated to McDonald customers through user friendly online ordering platforms and innovative promotional tactics. McDonald also uses online delivery and payment services to facilitate the delivery of its products directly to customers' homes, without requiring customers to specify a particular time or location, and efforts to enhance product packaging represent a marketing strategy that McDonald continues to apply.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. The qualitative, single case research design restricts the statistical generalizability of the findings to other fast food operators or to other regional markets beyond Medan, given that the study did not employ probability sampling or quantitative measurement instruments capable of supporting broader population level inferences. The reliance on secondary company documentation and previously published case material, rather than primary data collected directly from McDonald management or customers, means that certain operational details may reflect the perspective of the original source material rather than direct verification through field observation or interview. The SWOT analysis framework, while widely used in strategic management practice, is inherently descriptive and does not permit precise quantification of the relative weight that each identified strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat carries in shaping actual consumer behavior or firm performance. Finally, the study's focus on a single multinational franchise operator limits its capacity to capture the full diversity of marketing challenges faced by smaller, independently owned fast food and food service enterprises operating within the same competitive environment.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Study

Future research should extend this analysis through comparative case studies examining marketing strategy implementation across multiple fast food operators within the same regional market, allowing researchers to more precisely identify which strategic elements are genuinely distinctive to McDonald rather than common practice across the broader industry. Quantitative studies employing structured surveys of McDonald customers in Medan and comparable Indonesian cities would usefully complement this qualitative account by measuring the relative influence of pricing strategy, delivery convenience, and brand perception on actual purchase decisions and customer loyalty. Researchers might also productively investigate how smaller, independently owned fast food and food service enterprises adapt lessons from McDonald integrated marketing approach to their own resource constrained operating environments, given the practical relevance of such findings for small and medium enterprise development policy. Finally, given the persistent tension between fast food convenience and public health concerns identified in this study, future research should examine how McDonald and comparable fast food operators are adjusting product development strategy in response to growing consumer demand for healthier menu options, and what implications this adjustment carries for long term brand positioning within the fast food industry.

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Author Contributions

NDS conceptualized the study, collected and analyzed the secondary case data, and drafted the original manuscript. MA contributed to the literature review, validated the SWOT analysis framework, and critically reviewed and edited the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted independently using publicly available secondary data, academic literature, and company documentation. The authors received no financial support, sponsorship, or other benefits from McDonald's Corporation, PT Rekso Nasional Food, or any other organization that could have influenced the research process, analysis, interpretation of findings, or conclusions presented in this study.

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